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Editorial *by Pat Pinsent*

This issue of *IBBYlink* is devoted to the relationship between children's literature and human rights—an appropriate theme for a journal concerned with the international aspect of children's literature. It is sometimes claimed, perhaps without too much examination of the evidence, that books which have an extra-literary agenda tend to be bad books. There are of course many children's books whose didacticism means that they have little else to give to any reader, young or old. But equally there have been many authors whose only aim was entertainment but whose work is now of interest only to historians. If authors had totally rejected any issues other than the enjoyment of their audience we would never have had Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Huxley's *Brave New World* or Dickens' *Hard Times*. These are of course all written for adult readers, though (especially Orwell's) they have qualities that have brought them many teen-aged readers.

What of children's books that strive to make their young readers aware of the situation of people deprived of their human rights? Have they ever ranked among the classics of the genre? Can they ever have the kind of audience appeal of, for instance, fantasy?

Evidence from the nineteenth century suggests that while many of the classics of children's literature are set in a timeless fantasy world, the 'real' world and its problems nevertheless lay at the centre of many books for children and young people. The jury may still be out about the implied audiences and the literary merits, quite apart from the 'politically correctness,' of such diverse books as Sewell's *Black Beauty*, Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Kingsley's *The Water Babies* and Stretton's *Jessica's First Prayer*, but no-one could deny that human (or animal) rights were amongst the concerns of their authors.

Such issues may not have been to the forefront in most of the children's books of the first half of the twentieth century, but subsequently it would be a bold critic who suggested that preoccupation with human rights issues lessened the literary quality of Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry*, or

more recently Malorie Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses* and Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth*. These books would not exist without their authors' commitment to the rights of the underprivileged. Nor are books concerned with human rights inevitably realist in genre or solely textual in format. In particular, there are many picture books, both fantasy (as in June Counsel's *But Martin*) and realistic (as in Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch's *Amazing Grace* and Trish Cooke and Helen Oxenbury's *So Much*) which either take on equality issues or reflect British multi-ethnic culture and society.

Today our perspective on human rights is wide enough to encompass not only basic human needs such as freedom, housing, food and clothing, but also the right not to be discriminated against, especially in the workplace. As well as race, culture and class, which have been focal issues in many books published since the 1970s, other aspects such as age and disability have more recently attracted the attention of authors and illustrators and resulted in high quality texts. It is to be hoped that both authors and readers have developed beyond mere tokenism to a proper appreciation of the way in which children's books are enriched by a proper appreciation of the value and diversity of all human beings.

So it is without apology that we look at the subject of human rights in this issue. Books written out of commitment and conviction are not simply as good as those produced solely to entertain or even out of commercial motivation—they are often better, both as literary works in themselves and as resources to make their young readers think.

* * *

The next issue of IBBYlink will be devoted to the very serious subject of HUMOUR IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS. We would welcome contributions on this subject (or on anything else that interests you). Send to Pat Pinsent, 23 Burcott Rd., Purley, CR8 4AD; PatPinsent@aol.com by 1st September 2003.

Send submissions to:

Pat Pinsent
23 Burcott Road
Purley CR8 4AD
PatPinsent@aol.com

IBBY British Section Annual General Meeting

by Ann Lazim

This year's AGM was held on April 10th at the Society of Authors and Illustrators in South Kensington. It was good to have the meeting in fresh and comfortable surroundings. It also meant that members of the society were able to join us for a talk by our guest speaker Jay Heale from South Africa. Thanks are due to Jo Hodder for being our hostess and to Elizabeth Laird, our link between the two organisations.

There was a report about the previous year's activities, including attendance at the Jubilee Congress in Basel, Switzerland where Aidan Chambers received the Hans Christian Andersen Award and, as Chair of the British Section, I collected Quentin Blake's medal on his behalf. I was able to present it to him at an event at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, of which he is a patron, early in 2003.

At the congress, the British Section, along with Irish IBBY, were strongly urging the Executive and delegates from all national sections to support the formation of an IBBY Section in Palestine. It was good to be able to report that, at their meeting at the recent Bologna Book Fair, the Executive agreed to the admittance to IBBY of Palestine as its 65th section.

During 2002, we had a stand at two major children's book conferences: the Federation of Children's Book Groups Conference in Marlborough,

Wiltshire, and Magic Carpets in Leeds organised by the Society of Authors and Illustrators. Other activities include ongoing involvement with the Children's Laureate.

For 2003-2004, the existing British Section committee of Ann Lazim, Pam Robson, Pat Pinsent, Elizabeth Laird, Nikki Gamble, Fiona Collins, Posey Furnish, John Dunne, Roy Flowers and Ed Zaghini will be joined by Chris Lewis-Ashley. Members reading this newsletter are reminded that co-options during the year are always possible, whether to the general committee, or to help with a specific project.

The imminent retirement of Leena Maissen as Executive Director of IBBY was mentioned and members wished to convey their appreciation for her work and commitment to IBBY over many years.

After the AGM we were joined by authors and illustrators to hear from Jay Heale about children's books in South Africa and in particular about the next IBBY Congress to be held in Cape Town in September 2004. Jay made people very enthusiastic about attending the Congress, both in this meeting and when he spoke at the conference of the Federation of Children's Book Groups at the weekend following the AGM. I think there will be a good sized delegation from the UK at the South African congress!

* * * * *

Hans Christian Andersen Awards Nominations 2004

The British Section of IBBY is delighted to announce that our nominations for the Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2004 are **Geraldine McCaughrean** and **Tony Ross**.

Geraldine McCaughrean has written many outstanding and original novels for young people, ranging over a great variety of settings and time periods. They include *The Kite Rider* and *Stop the Train* which were both on the shortlist for the Carnegie Medal last year. She won the Carnegie and the Guardian Children's Fiction Award for *A Pack of Lies*, the Whitbread Children's Book of the Year for her first novel *A Little Lower than the Angels* and the Beefeater Children's Fiction Award for *Gold Dust*. Geraldine has also written many retellings of classics and traditional stories, myths and legends. Her retelling of *A Pilgrim's Progress* won the inaugural Blue Peter Award, chosen by children. Other books include novels for younger children such as *Six Storey House* and picture book texts like *My Grandmother's Clock*.

Tony Ross has produced many well loved picture books. His early work included humorous retellings of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *Little Red Riding Hood*. He is both author and illustrator of the series about the Little Princess which began so memorably with *I Want My Potty*. He has often collaborated with author Jeanne Willis, on the *Dr Xargle* books, and more recently on *Manky Monkey*, an evolutionary tale and *The Tadpole's Promise*, a love story between a tadpole and a caterpillar. Tony has illustrated an enormous amount of children's fiction old and new, including a new edition of Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking*, Terence Blacker's *Ms Wiz* series, Ian Whybrow's *Little Wolf* and Francesca Simon's *Horrid Henry*.

We hope to be able to print the full list of nominations for the 2004 Awards in the next issue of *IBBYlink*. The winners will be announced at the Bologna Book Fair in April 2004.

Human Rights: The Importance of Education and Reading

by Nicola Cadbury

The right to education

The right to an education is usually taken for granted by people living in the UK. But there are currently 130 million children worldwide that are being denied that right; they do not have access to any schooling.

A positive step has been recognition from the international community that education is fundamental to reducing poverty. Global goals for school enrolment and literacy have been set with the ambitious target of Universal Primary Education by 2015. One notable success story is Uganda, which recently achieved Universal Primary Education with a phenomenal growth in enrolments from 2.5 million to 6.5 million in just four years.

But the day-to-day reality of such policies is often huge class sizes and vastly overstretched resources. So in Uganda, classes can have as many as 100 pupils per teacher and there is a national average of one textbook for every 7 pupils (across all subject areas!). The government recognises the need for textbooks and has set a target for textbook provision but they are still a long way from achieving their goal. It's a shame that hardly any funding is available for supplementary texts, which are vital if children are to get into the habit of reading. Indeed, many children who have received a primary education are still barely literate. The Uganda National Exam Board recently revealed the results of a literacy test taken by children in their final year of primary school—just 13% of students had passed.

Books for education

One of the essential ingredients of a good quality education is adequate access to reading materials. And this is where the charity Book Aid International comes in. They supply around 700,000 books each year to support reading and learning among communities in the developing

world. Books go out to schools, libraries, refugee camps and a range of organisations where they can support both formal and informal learning.

Books for reading promotion

But it's often not enough just to provide access to books, so reading promotion is also a very important part of the agency's work. And to launch a new phase of work in this area Book Aid International held a link-up event on World Book Day, 6th March 2003 which united children in eleven countries to read and learn about one another's lives.

All the events were themed around activities linked to the book *A Life Like Mine* (published by Dorling Kindersley and UNICEF) which explores at children's rights through looking at children's lives all around the world. Each event was twinned with one other and the participants put together scrap books with pictures, letters and information about their daily lives which they then swapped with children from another country.

The children who participated in our project responded well to the book. Its simple approach and interesting global stories made the subject of child rights fun and accessible. Many children also came across issues that are directly relevant to them. For instance in Malawi the right to health care was a poignant issue for the young students at the SOS Primary School, Lilongwe. Jessy Nyasulu wrote a message for the scrap book which asked, "I want that AIDS should finish in our country because AIDS is taking our lives."

Book Aid International contact details:

Website www.bookaid.org

Telephone 020 7733 3577

Email Nicola.Cadbury@bookaid.org

**Book Aid
International**

Nicola Cadbury

Human Wrongs Into Human Rights

by Beverley Naidoo

I have a photo of a mural in South Africa painted after its first democratic elections with the bold words: HUMAN WRONGS INTO HUMAN RIGHTS. This was the vision behind the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, alongside the belief that it is both necessary and possible for human beings to change. This spirit was embodied in the TRC's Chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu who wrote in his introduction to my collection of South African short stories *Out of Bounds* (Puffin):

There is a beast in each of us and none of us can ever say we would never be guilty of such evil. We must acknowledge that it [apartheid] happened. But most importantly we should, after reading these quite disturbing stories, renew our commitment to the new democracy and its new culture of respect for fundamental human rights and say for ourselves and our descendants, 'Never again will we want to treat fellow human beings in this fashion.' And I hope and pray that others in other lands may commit themselves to ensure that such evil will never be tolerated and that they will not be guilty of perpetrating it.

Archbishop Tutu (a rare hero to this agnostic writer!) is more direct about his hopes than I can ever be. He has the prerogative of the preacher. My role as a fiction writer precludes me from preaching. But as a good preacher knows, there is nothing more powerful than a good story that invites us to imagine. Through story we can enter another time, another place, another person. Story works through the power of 'if'. If that were me... if I were there... That little word 'if' can be the key to understanding how life might be in someone else's shoes. We won't get an exact fit but at least we can begin to ask new questions as we try to look at the world through a different set of eyes.

Of course stories can also be used to control, to promote insularity and xenophobia. People can tell stories that promote tribal loyalty by constantly reminding members of the tribe about injustices suffered by their ancestors, while blinding them to injustices they are currently meting out to others. I hope that the stories that I tell, on the other hand, encourage readers to cross boundaries. In *Out of Bounds*, each story is set in a different decade across the apartheid era and into 'post-apartheid'. My characters, drawn from South Africa's 'rainbow' people, are faced with choices in a society that meant them to be confined within 'racial' boundaries. They are expected to accept or, at very least, to avert their eyes from, injustice. In the first story, a white 'townie' is desperate to be part of a gang of white farm children who set her a dare. While carrying it out, she

witnesses a brutal beating of a young black farm worker. Her response suggests how easy it is for violence to be normalised. *The Dare* is set in 1948, the year in which the apartheid government came to power. The setting is specific but the story is deliberately timeless. Abuse of human rights has a long history in South Africa prior to apartheid laws.

In *The Playground*, set in 1995 after the first democratic elections, a black mother insists that her daughter Rosa be admitted to a school that has previously been reserved for white children. The law has changed but many of the white parents are still resistant. Rosa is justifiably scared. But her mother tells her that someone has to be first. She repeats to Rosa an old Zulu saying that translates into: 'People are people through one another.' A pivotal choice in this story has to be made by the white boy Hennie, who has had Rosa's mother looking after him and his family since he was a baby. As in life, my characters reveal themselves in the way they behave to each other.

One of apartheid's greatest crimes was the breaking up of black families. This underlies *Journey to Jo'burg* (HarperCollins) with Naledi and Tiro making an extraordinary journey to find their mother and to bring her home to save their baby sister. The same crime underlies *No Turning Back* (Puffin) where twelve-year-old Siphon inherits the legacy of apartheid and a broken, violent home. He runs away to the streets of Jo'burg where street children try to reconstitute themselves into a family. He meets Judy who is white, well-off and desperately keen to bridge the fractures of racism. The novel is an exploration of possibilities.

Behind each of my stories lie a complex of human wrongs. As a species, we seem to have an enormous predisposition towards them. Yet as Susan Sontag writes in *The Power of Principle*: 'At the centre of our moral life are the great stories of those who have said: No. No. I will not serve.' (*The Guardian* 26.4.03) She is referring to real life and real people. I seek to create fictional people faced with choices as in real life. Apart from *The Other Side of Truth* (Puffin), which takes place largely in London, my South African settings may, at first, seem rather remote to British readers. But as readers are drawn into the world of the fiction, I hope they will be inspired to imagine connections. The implications of these stories are universal. My second hope is that the stories will always provoke questions. Wherever there are human wrongs there will always be the idea of human rights.

"I hope the stories I tell encourage readers to cross boundaries"

Human Wrongs

Beverley Naidoo

Lines in the Sand

New Writing on War and Peace

by Irene??

LINES IN THE SAND: New Writing on War and Peace.
Editors: Mary Hoffman and Rhiannon Lassiter.

The idea for this book was born out of a white heat of rage and frustration at what has been happening in the Gulf. On March 25th a mother and daughter, both authors, decided to approach other authors and artists to find out if they would add their voices and talents to an anthology aimed at children to make them aware of the human cost of war and to think about the benefits of peace.

By 31st March John Nicoll at Frances Lincoln had agreed to publish the book, Jane Ray to illustrate the front cover and Michael Rosen had lent his support by emailing the list of people who had signed a letter to the *Guardian* (6th February). A publication date was set for 12th June with all royalties and profits going to UNICEF's emergency appeal for the children of Iraq. Within an hour of emails going out the first response had come in from Ben Hudson, a Canadian artist, and since then the floodgates have opened. 'We're going to have to work night and day to meet the deadline, but I'm sure we will as there's so much passion, commitment and anger,' Mary Hoffman said to Graham Marks of *Publishing News* on 1st April, on the eve of the Bologna International Book Fair. The story made the front page of the Bologna issue and *The Bookseller* also reported that *Lines in the Sand* was 'the most topical book at the fair.' The book was also selected as a Bologna Highlight in the *TES* (25th April).

A deadline for submissions was set at 30th April. Within this short period of time, nearly 150 writers and artists including some of the industry's most prestigious and talented authors and illustrators, from David Almond to Jane Yolen, Ros Asquith to Nick Sharratt, have responded by donating prose, poems and illustrations. The contributions are international, with submissions from Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Greece, Japan, Turkey and the USA. 'The overwhelming response and the high quality of contributions made it clear it was an idea whose time had come,' says Rhiannon Lassiter. 'As one contributor said, it was a book that wanted to be.'

All the material is new or very recent. 95% of the writers have written something new for this anthology and 98% of artists have provided new work for the book. The book covers a variety of wars including the two World Wars, the Falklands, Nigeria, the Gulf wars, Kosovo, Spanish Civil War, conflicts in Croatia, Cyprus and visions of alternative futures in a world without war or still devastated by it. Each contribution depicts a strong anti-war message and will serve as a

cry for peace in these troubled times. Michael Morpurgo, the new Children's Laureate, has contributed 'For Carlos: A Letter From Your Father,' a moving account of the Falklands war seen through the eyes of an Argentinian soldier shortly before his death. Kevin Crossley-Holland has donated a chapter from his latest novel in the award-winning Arthur trilogy and there are new poems from Carol Ann Duffy, Brian Patten and Michael Rosen. 98% of artists have provided new work for the book including Shirley Hughes, Korky Paul and Chris Riddell. The material ranges from an allegory for the younger reader, 'Eco-Wolf and the War-Pigs' by Laurence Anholt to some hard-hitting messages like that of Nigel Gray's poem, 'The Butcher,' inspired by the conflict in Northern Ireland. Editorial responsibility for the content rests entirely with Mary Hoffman and Rhiannon Lassiter and in no way reflects the views of UNICEF, who are the beneficiaries of the project.

Lines in the Sand will be published on 12th June, £4.99, for children aged 8 upwards. ISBN 0-7112-2282-7. All the artists are donating their original artwork for an auction, whose proceeds will also go to the charity. Mary Hoffman and Rhiannon Lassiter are available to talk about the book, the mixed emotions that the book has evoked, the generosity of spirit that has made its publication possible and their ultimate aim to provide seeds of hope for children with a book that depicts the reality of war without being too disturbing and at the same time helps child victims of the conflict in Iraq.

Lines in the Sand
Frances Lincoln Publishers, 4 Torriano Mews, Torriano
Ave, London NW5 2RZ, 020 7 284 4009
website: www.frances-lincoln.com

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Pat Pinsent, editor • Elisa Oreglia, design and layout
PatPinsent@aol.com • elisaoreglia@hotmail.com

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Lines in the Sand

Irene ??

The Right to be Noticed

by Elizabeth Laird

Right to be Noticed

Elizabeth Laird

Some foolhardy writers, including myself, have been known to set their novels in cultures to which they don't themselves belong, and even to write from the point of view of characters whose language they can't speak. Violations of the rights of the child are often central themes of these books. In both *Little Soldier* by Bernard Ashley and *AK* by Peter Dickinson, the main characters are child soldiers, fighting in African conflicts. Article 38 of the UN Children's Convention of the Rights of the Child states that children are not supposed to be recruited into the armed services, or take part in armed conflict. Quite a number of children's novels tell the stories of young refugees, whose rights are dealt with under Article 22 of the convention. These excellent books include *The Other Side of Truth* by Beverley Naidoo, *Refugee* by Benjamin Zephaniah, and *War Orphan* by Rachel Anderson.

There's a question which I dread, as I'm sure my fellow writers of such books do. It is this: What gives you the right to assume that you can step into the shoes of a child from a different culture and write as if from their point of view? Isn't this both insensitive and arrogant?

A simple response is to counter with another question: If it isn't permissible for an author to write about another culture, how far should we take this rule? Should we ban men from writing about girls, or women from creating boy characters? Should the able bodied be barred from writing from the point of view of a disabled person, or vice versa? Should any of us write about anyone except ourselves?

More seriously, though, we have to admit that such attempts do indeed risk misrepresenting children and their cultures, and can result in the kinds of stereotypes and negative images of which we are all aware from the children's books of the past. None of us wants to create new Uncle Toms. It could also be argued that we authors risk violating other parts of the UN Code, for example Item 8, on the preservation of identity, Item 16, on respect for privacy, honour and reputation, and Item 36, on the right to be protected from all forms of exploitation.

There is however another right, not enshrined in the UN Children's Convention. It is the right to be considered, to be noticed, to be heard. The right not to be ignored.

At the present time, the children's novel is not a common genre in many parts of the world. There are

a great many cultural milieus in which such books are unknown and unread, and authors to create them don't exist. Those children's books that are available are often simplified versions of old European stories. Browse in a book shop in Beirut, Beijing or Addis Ababa and (alongside Harry Potter!) you will find *Treasure Island*, *The Three Musketeers* and *Peter Pan*, old fashioned Ladybird books with flaxen haired Cinderellas and blue-eyed sleeping Beauties, and row upon row of Disney characters. You won't find much else. Cultural stereotyping is a two-way process.

There is an astonishing, indeed overwhelming, richness of fiction for young people in the affluent west and yet, among all the thousands of excellent books exploring fantastic worlds, the historical past, the realm of the supernatural, the thrills of magic and enchantment, how often will a young reader find a book that gives them the genuine excitement of a new

window on the real world, a sense of discovering what is actually out there, what other people of the same age are living through, here and now? The lucky ones have read Nancy Farmer's *A Girl Called Disaster*, Gaye Hicyilmaz's *Against the Storm*, or Jamila Gavin's wonderful *Surya* trilogy, but the chances are that in the great clamour of fictional voices, those ones will not have been heard.

The time may come when books

I have written such as *Kiss the Dust* (about the experiences of Iraqi Kurds) or *The Garbage King* (about the street children of Addis Ababa) will be torn up and discarded by Kurds and Ethiopians, who will tell me that they don't recognise themselves in my pages, and that they would prefer to tell their own story in their own way. So far, I have to say, this has not been my experience. On the contrary. People accustomed to being ignored have collaborated with great enthusiasm, telling me their experiences, explaining the background and adding detail with exuberant enthusiasm. They have often expressed astonishment and delight in finding that someone out there has noticed, and have welcomed my efforts with amazing generosity.

* * * * *

Joan Lingard's *Kevin and Sadie* Novels and the U.N. Human Rights Agenda

by Darja Mazi-Leskovar

Children's literature has always been considered as one of the prime agents for helping the young reader to become a future 'ideal' citizen, something which in today's world also implies fostering a positive attitude towards peace. United Nations documents are also creators of preconditions for prevention of conflicts, peaceful resolution of tensions and guarantees for freedom on individual, communal, national and international levels. If it is axiomatic that UN documents should be prime agents for peace and human rights, it is worth considering a few of the publications of this world organization in which the freedom of thought and religion are considered as crucial factors in the establishment of a culture of peace. It is my intention in this paper to look at five English books for young adults and at a few United Nations documents in order to examine the link between these two agents.

Joan Lingard's novels *The Twelfth Day of July* (1970), *Across the Barricades* (1972), *Into Exile* (1973), *A Proper Place* (1975) and *Hostages to Fortune* (1977) are set in the period of escalation of conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. The protagonists, Sadie and Kevin, are a religiously mixed young couple. They meet when performing acts of intolerance towards the opposite group, but when they are confronted with the consequences of violence, they decide to fight it. They discover that the differences in religious background should not present a cause for hatred and evil deeds of any kind. Belonging to different churches is no more seen as an obstacle to dialogue, friendship and sharing. Their personal experience of suffering and victimisation leads them not only to a refusal of every kind of intolerance, but also to a new view of each other's beliefs. Their acts and words provide testimony to the standpoint proclaimed in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.' The couple firmly believes that peace cannot be restored in the ravaged and impoverished Northern Ireland without the radical 'elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief.'

To their great disillusionment, they find that they can share the vision only with a few relatives and friends. When a friend is killed, Kevin admits to Sadie: 'I can't stay here any longer. I haven't a job and I'm sick of bombs and people getting killed! . . . It is not a case of running away, you mustn't think that. I just don't want any part of what's going on here. I don't like the way we've got to live. It's not living anyway.' (*Across the Barricades*, p.168). Sadie, too, understands that building bridges across the barricades may cost

them even their lives, so they both abandon Belfast and go into exile, to find a proper place to live in peace. While the story progresses, Sadie and Kevin do not lose contact with what is going on in their home region torn by clashes and terrorist actions. As outside observers who have to win the trust of people in the new English environment, they become more and more convinced that peace could be constructed only if people tried to see the opposite side in a new, positive light. Their conviction is that overcoming stereotypes, instead of 'breeding grounds of prejudice' (*A Proper Place*, p.30) could lead to peace in Ireland, a thought consistent with the UN constitution, 'It is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.' Despite their young age, Kevin and Sadie's understanding of the complexity of the inter-related problems can be easily paralleled with the messages of the Unesco documents in which the respect for human rights, religious rights included, is presented as one of the preconditions for a successful establishment of peace.

The advocates of the principles featuring in the United Nations official papers admit that noble goals expressed in various documents from the Charter of the United Nations (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) to all conventions, covenants and declarations are just empty platitudes if not promoted nationally and internationally on various levels in order to reach every person. The audience of official documents is however rather restricted. Failure to reach a larger number has led to the establishment of Recommendation 74, which set the guiding principles for the new education policy worldwide. Education should, among other things, lead to the ability to communicate with others and to readiness on the part of individuals to participate in solving the problems of their community. It is a means for spreading tolerance, including the spreading of the values of religious tolerance. Support for education assuring respect for religion, belief and opinion was strongly expressed in the 1993 Barcelona meeting on the contribution of religions to the culture of peace, with a message, repudiating hatred, intolerance and violence in the name of religion. Particular stress on the protection of rights related to various cultural and religious traditions features in the 1999 UNESCO programme 'Spiritual Convergences and Intercultural Dialogue,' in which the importance of education for interreligious dialogue was underlined.

In this context the teaching of literature has a special role since reading fiction has never been

**Kevin and Sadie
Novels**

**Darja Mazi-
Leskovar**

Writing and Human Rights

Defining and Defending Freedom of Expression

by Liam O'Carroll

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The pencil felt thick and awkward in his fingers. He began to write down the thoughts that came into his head. He wrote first in large clumsy capitals: FREEDOM

IS SLAVERY

George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Defining Freedom of Expression

Berlin 2003 marked recently the 70th anniversary of the burning of books by the Nazis in Germany, only months after they came to power. The censorship of literature is often one of the first victims in human rights abuses, and, as history teaches us, often the precursor to greater extremes. Rights to freedom of expression have the potential to be flouted in contexts as diverse as print journalism, film, television, media, Internet, radio, visual arts, theatre, literature. Work can be censored or banned and authors persecuted, imprisoned and murdered for political, religious, sexual or other reasons. The accessible *100 Banned Books* (Karolidis, Bald and Sova, 1999) illustrates this aptly, showing that texts from novels to political treatises and sacred scripture like the Bible and the Qur'an have all been restricted over the centuries.

Restriction of freedom of expression is far from an historical matter. Media and journalistic work is more restricted the world over than one might imagine, and professional organisations exist to campaign against and combat such restrictions. One of the most recent concerns has been about freedom of expression on the Internet: debates about and prosecutions over pornography and the right to privacy of communication are just two of the issues that regularly surface in the media. Freedom of expression, like freedom of religion and belief, is not only amongst the most sensitive of rights and the most contested but also the least easy to resolve. What may be freedom of expression to one individual or socio-cultural group may

well (and frequently does) cause offence to other individuals or groups.

The most high profile *literary* case in the late twentieth century involved Salman Rushdie; a *fatwah*, originating from the Islamic state of Iran, was issued against the British author for his novel, *The Satanic Verses*. There has been much in the post-September 11 world about the clash between universal human rights and certain religious traditions, a clash which can also surface within liberal, western democracies supposedly founded upon the principles of basic rights and freedoms. J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels, for instance, are amongst the most censored of any modern work, with bans applied, largely from Christian fundamentalists, in Australia, Canada, England, Germany, and especially in the United States of America.

All these issues about reading and writing are of critical importance in considering children's literature—whether for authors of children's books or in political issues that

determine what children can read.

“Work can be censored or banned, and authors persecuted, imprisoned and murdered for political, religious, sexual or other reasons...”

Defending Freedom of Expression

International legal standards focusing on, or of relevance to, freedom of expression are outlined in the table below. At times of tyranny and oppression, the writer, the artist, the film-maker and the musician can all provide a powerful focus for resistance. Oppressive regimes ensure that such forms of artistic expression, along with all aspects of the media, are controlled. The campaigning organisation 'Index on Censorship' has called this work the 'embarrassment of tyrannies' (Webb and Bell, 1997). Far from being a luxury, freedom of artistic and journalistic expression are foundational to democracies, and anathema to dictatorships.

International Legal Standards: Defending Freedom of Expression

Convention on the International Right of Correction (16 December 1952, into effect 24 August 1962)

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)

International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (1966)

Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation (UNESCO) (4 November 1966)

Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education

Writing and Human Rights ...

relating to *Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (UNESCO) (19 November 1974)

For full texts of the documents, follow links at www.unhcr.org

Many useful links, relating to Multiculturalism, Cultural Heritage, Linguistic and Religious rights and other areas are also to be found via the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (www.unesco.org/). Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) also play a vital role in this area of freedom of expression and censorship, providing a wealth of research and professional networking opportunities for teachers and those interested in children's literature and attempts to suppress it.

International PEN (Poets, Essayists, Novelists) rightly describes itself as a 'worldwide association of writers'. The organisation has three guiding principles:

- *To promote intellectual cooperation and understanding among writers*
- *To create a world community of writers that would emphasise the central role of literature in the development of world culture*
- *To defend literature against the many threats to its survival that the modern world poses.*

The organisation (British URL www.pen.org.uk) has a highly prestigious list of literary Nobel laureates amongst its members. It was founded in London in 1921 by Mrs. C.A.Dawson Scott, its first president being John Galsworthy. Early members included Joseph Conrad, George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells. As a premier NGO concerned with freedom of

expression and literary freedoms worldwide, PEN has representative, consultative status at UNESCO, and a range of World Wide Links, also being involved with the Index on Censorship www.index.org and Charter '88 www.charter88.org.

Suggested Further Reading

American Library Association (2002) *Intellectual Freedom Manual* (Washington: Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association)

de Baets, Antoon (2002) *Censorship of Historical Thought: A World Guide, 1945-2000* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press)

Jones, Derek (2001) *Censorship: A World Encyclopaedia*

Karolides, Nicholas J., Margaret Bald and Dawn B. Sova (eds) (1999) *100 Banned Books: Censorship Histories of World Literature*

Simmons, John S. and Eliza T. Desang (2001) *School Censorship in the 21st Century: A Guide for Teachers and School Library Media Specialists*

Webb, W.L. and Rose Bell (1997) *An Embarrassment of Tyrannies: Twenty-Five Years of Index on Censorship* (London: Victor Gollancz)

Dr Liam Gearon is Reader in Education and Director of the Centre for Research in Human Rights, University of Surrey Roehampton (www.roehampton.ac.uk/crhr). The Centre for Research in Human Rights actively encourages MPhil/ PhD research proposals from teachers and policy-makers. This article is significantly adapted from his latest book The Human Rights Handbook: A Global Perspective for Education (Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham, 2003).

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Book Trust Children's Books Collection Now at Roehampton

A ceremony on May 21st marked the opening at Mount Clare, University of Surrey Roehampton, of a collection of approximately 50,000 items from the Book Trust: fiction and non-fiction texts, picture books, toy and board books, all from recent years. These had been previously held at the Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green but not generally accessible. Following a welcome from Dr Bernadette Porter, Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor Kim Reynolds, Director of the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature, and Chris Meade, Executive Director of Book Trust, gave a brief account of the relocation of the material, and then Nina Bawden officially launched the open access collection. Janet Dowling, a Storyteller, completed the proceedings in an appropriate way by telling three traditional tales.

To visit the collection contact the Academic Liaison Officers: Julie Mills (J.Mills@roehampton.ac.uk) or Sue Mansfield (S.Mansfield@roehampton.ac.uk) Telephone 020 8392 3772

**Book Trust
Collection**

Translating *Where Were You, Robert?*

by Anthea Bell

(In the last issue of *IBBYlink* we noted that the Marsh Award had been given to Anthea Bell. This is the speech she gave at the presentation ceremony.)

I would like, first, to read a short passage from quite late in the book, in the chapter entitled ‘The Sixth Journey’, which takes the boy Robert, as he is cast further and further back in time, to the middle of the Thirty Years’ War. He has fallen in with a band of robbers, and when they raid a mill he picks up a small volume entitled *The Husbandman’s Historical Calendar for the Year 1638*. After the raid Robert sits with the robber chief Radomir, studying this book.

It was not the kind of ‘calendar’ that Robert’s father kept on his desk, which was more of an engagements diary, but a collection of all kinds of curious facts. The book gave a weather forecast for the whole year in advance, and not only that: it told you about comets and witches too. One chapter gave detailed instructions for bleeding a sick person. Robert almost threw up when he saw the disgusting woodcut of the leeches, and swiftly turned the page. After a while Radomir asked him, ‘Can you really read, then?’ His tone was incredulous, as if it were a rare talent. ‘Of course,’ said Robert. ‘Anything about the future in there?’ ‘Yes, listen to this. “According to Precise Calculations, Opinions and Conjectures, there shall be Wretched, Sad Conditions, with Wars and Great Bloodshed, the Death of Princes, Pestilence, Famine, Earthquake and Many Other Ills, as already Prognosticated in the Year 1630 by Twenty Astrologers, and described by Doctor Herlicium, Mathematician of Greifswald.” Want to hear any more?’ ‘To be sure, but tell me how *my* stars stand. My sign’s Sagittarius.’ Robert had not the faintest idea of astrology, but to please Radomir he muttered something or other. ‘Wait a moment ... I see a conjunction of Mars and Saturn in the sign of Scorpio ...’ ‘And what does that mean?’ Robert didn’t want to land himself in trouble—and who knows what might come of it, he thought, if I try casting Radomir’s horoscope? Perhaps his stars don’t look too good, and if so I wouldn’t want to be the bearer of bad news.

I chose that brief extract because of the way it points up the advantages of literacy. Robert’s ability to read is regarded as little short of miraculous by the chieftain of the robber band, and it has already given

Robert essential information; when he first read the title of the book he knew where and when he was. A trick of his eyesight means that if he glimpses some detail of a photograph, a film, or in earlier periods a picture he may inadvertently find himself in the scene—and since, until he ingeniously works out how to paint himself back into his own twentieth-century kitchen, he can only go backwards in time, he thinks gloomily that he will probably end up in the Stone Age. This is a *Bildungsroman*; from episode to episode Robert must live on his wits, but at least his literacy and the knowledge it has helped him to acquire enable him to work out his current time and place from a 19th-century Norwegian street sign, impress an 18th-century philosopher by discussing the Moon and the binary system in mathematics, and earn the respect of a 17th-century brigand simply by being able to read at all. (And incidentally, when stuck for a language wherever he happens to be, this modern German boy is perfectly ready to try speaking English to his companions.) Robert is clearly

“Robert is clearly a reading child, and reading children are exercising their imaginations the whole time...”

a reading child, and reading children are exercising their imaginations the whole time—I am sure David Almond [who made the actual presentation at the ceremony], who so memorably integrates Blakean ideas and quotations with an inner-city background in his *Skellig*, would agree. The power of stories is also one of the main themes in Reinhard Jung’s extraordinary fable, *Bambert’s Book of Missing Stories*, which I was so happy to translate for Egmont.

People sometimes ask why anyone should translate foreign books for children when the English-speaking world has its own strong tradition. As I see it, both the reading habit and an international outlook are best developed young, but with the exception of the lucky bilingual few (including I hope my own half-Danish baby granddaughters) children can’t read the best books written for them in other languages while they are still children. Translations and translators are therefore necessary—not that everyone would agree. Last summer in Chicago I met Michael Henry Heim, who translated Enzensberger’s other book for young people *The Number Devil*, the mathematical counterpart to Robert’s adventures in history, and I reminded him that some years ago we were both on a translators’ panel at a PEN seminar. Our session, however, was preceded by an eminent

Continued on page 12

Translating

Anthea Bell

News and Announcements

by Pat Pinsent

COMING SHORTLY

Elizabeth Laird (author of *Kiss the Dust* and *Jake's Tower*), to whom the British section of IBBY owes much for her committed membership of the Committee and several contributions to *IBBYlink*, has collaborated with Sonia Nimr in writing a book about three boys living under the occupation in Palestine. It is being published by Macmillan in August 2003, entitled *A Little Piece of Land*. Look out for it!

APOLOGIES

Name change

I must apologise to Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth, who wrote *Re-education of a Society: Translating in the GDR* for *IBBYlink* in Summer 2002, for assuming that 'Asgard' from her email address was her surname!

BASEL CONGRESS, 2002

We should like to draw attention to the fact that Patricia Crampton, former Andersen Jury President and translator, was the Chair of one of the panel discussions during the Congress, 'Jella Lepman and the Founding of IBBY: Are Children's Books still an International Issue?'

PUBLICATIONS

A number of IBBY publications have appeared to mark the fiftieth anniversary. These include brochures (free for single copies) of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award; International Book Day 1967-2002; the IBBY Honour List 2002; and Best of Books for Young People with Disabilities: Jubilee Selection 2002. *Hans Christian Andersen Awards 1956-2002* (history of the awards and profiles of all the winners) (20 euros).

Contact ibby@ibby.org for details of how to obtain these.

The IBBY journal, *Bookbird*, may be obtained for 10\$ an issue; contact journals@utoronto.ca for details

Feedback, Plymouth Young People's Reviews, provides exactly what it says—a chance to know what the young readers in the Teen Review Group have to say about recent books. Contact libby@inotherwords.co.uk for details

INTERNATIONAL IBBY NEWS

New Directors

After 33 years of distinguished service to IBBY, Leena Maissen has recently retired. Kimete Basha (born in Australia, of Albanian origin, educated in Canada and working in Belgium) was elected IBBY's new Executive Director, while Liz Page (of British origin, working in Basel) was appointed Administrative Director. The international aspect clearly remains well to the fore!

Palestine Section

If you read the report on the 2002 IBBY Congress, you will remember that there was considerable debate about whether Palestine should be admitted as a national section, following a motion put forward by the British section and supported by the Irish section. We are happy to report that it has now been agreed that Palestine should become the 65th IBBY section. It will be located at the Tamer Institute for Community Education in Ramallah, which has always been strongly supportive of all areas of children's literature, including libraries, publishing, and activities involving children's participation. See www.tamerinst.org, or email tamer@palnet.org for further information.

APPRECIATION

I should like to express my thanks to Elisa Oreglia who has been responsible for the design and layout of *IBBYlink* for the last seven issues, including this one. Her artistry and efficiency have been of the highest quality, taking a major role in the rebirth of this Newsletter/Journal. She will be very difficult to replace!

(Elisa Oreglia replies: It has been a pleasure working with the British IBBY, and especially with Pat Pinsent, a fabulous editor, always attentive to the small details that make a designer's life easier. I have learnt a lot from you all in the past two years, and the passion and devotion that you have for children's books has been a true inspiration)

Michael Morpurgo is the Third Children's Laureate

by Pat Pinsent

The British Section of IBBY would like to congratulate Michael Morpurgo on having been appointed Children's Laureate for the period from 2003 to 2005. At a ceremony held at Waterstone's, Piccadilly, on May 14th, Ian Hislop disclosed the name of the recipient of this honour for a lifetime's achievement, and reminded the audience that being appointed as laureate brought with it the responsibility of being an ambassador for children's books, a role so effectively performed by the two previous holders. Baroness Blackstone then presented the new laureate with the insignia of the award—Michael was keen to ensure that it should be the Baroness who actually hung the medal around his neck!

In his reply, Michael Morpurgo spoke of himself as 'the storyteller' who, with the late lamented Ted Hughes, the Poet Laureate, had put forward the idea of establishing a laureateship in order to enhance the image of children's literature, too often seen as less significant than that written for adults. He praised the work done by Lois Beeson in the process of setting up

the award, and spoke of his plan to arrange an evening of readings in her memory during the autumn. As Laureate, his immediate intentions are to carry on emphasising the immense importance of the role of story in children's lives—we look forward to seeing what this means in practice!

The departing laureate, Anne Fine, couldn't come to the ceremony because she was in Australia awaiting the birth of her first grandchild, but Quentin Blake, the first laureate, was there, and also Geraldine McCaughrean, whose nomination for the Hans Christian Andersen award had just been announced by British IBBY. Before the actual ceremony, Jacqueline Wilson answered questions about her own writing from the numerous children present, who were wearing sweatshirts recording how they had been involved in the selection process. As supporters of the award, Waterstones had ensured that the occasion would be a significant and enjoyable one (not least by ensuring that the champagne was flowing plentifully!).

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Anthea Bell - continued from page 10

pundit who swept in, stated categorically that all translation was pointless, useless, and downright bad, and swept out again leaving the rest of us to pick up the pieces. We decided that we might be evils but were necessary evils—although I would prefer Hans Magnus Enzensberger's own memorable phrase at the Goethe-Institut the other night, when he described translators, hard-working and low-profile as they are, as the 'aristocratic coolies' of the literary world. Being a translator himself, as well as a writer, critic and editor, he knows what he's talking about.

Translators of children's books are used to the implication that it is a second-class activity, too easy to be worth mentioning, just as children's authors themselves have been downgraded for years. This is of course arrant nonsense, and it is delightful to see literature for young people written by authors of the calibre of David Almond receiving proper critical attention these days. I also definitely see a greater openness to foreign children's literature in the book world of late. I feel sure that the Marsh Award has contributed to that openness—more than once recently a publisher asking me to report on a book has specifically wanted to know whether it might be a contender for the award. That is exactly as it should be, and all of us who feel strongly on the subject are enormously appreciative of the support and sponsorship given to the award by the Marsh Trust and the Arts Council, and of all the administrative work done by the NCRCL.

With this change in the climate of opinion, I myself have probably translated more books for children in the last couple of years than in the preceding decade, if not two decades. I greatly enjoy translating books for adults, but to me there will always be something special about books for young people. Children are not second-class citizens, nor is children's literature a second-class genre, as anyone can see when a figure of such literary distinction as Hans Magnus Enzensberger chooses to write a book for young people. It was a pleasure and a privilege to translate *Where were you, Robert?*; to have it shortlisted for the Marsh Award, which has done so much to extend our awareness of international children's literature, was an honour; and to find that a translation on which I enjoyed working so much has won the award is a very great honour indeed. Thank you very much.

**Children's
Laureate**

Pat Pinsent

More than just a Conference

by Jay Heale

How many conferences are interesting but just talk? How many times do you come away feeling that something new has been set in motion? When the South African Children's Book Forum accepted the weighty task of hosting the 2004 IBBY World Congress, one of the earliest decisions was that the children of South Africa must benefit. To have six hundred children's book enthusiasts from all over the world meeting in Cape Town would be exciting but not enough.

So as long ago as 1999 fund-raising was started with two intentions: to facilitate the Congress itself and to provide books for children who have none. The resulting Schools Programme has so far donated fifteen picture-book classroom libraries to underprivileged schools, often needing to teach the teachers how to use such books in a classroom situation. Such children have probably never before in their lives held a brand new book in their hands.

Yet even this is not enough if teachers and parents do not understand the importance of quality

books in a young child's life. This is what the IBBY Congress must try to prove. Books for reading enjoyment are not an elite luxury in the African situation. Children need a balanced diet for their minds as well as their bodies.

Any delegates to the 29th IBBY Congress in Cape Town (5 to 9 September 2004) will help the children of Africa by their very presence there. They will provide positive proof that books are important, and also encouragement to the publishers in Africa to show off the best of their wares with which you can load up your bulging suitcase, alongside the South African wine, carvings, cloth, beads and photographs from the top of Table Mountain.

To find out more, visit www.sacbf.org.za for updated details and online registration. For a colour brochure, send your postal address to SACBF, PO Box 847, Howard Place, 7450 South Africa or e-mail sacbf@worldonline.co.za

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Sadie and Kevin - continued from page 7

considered only a school activity. All over the world fiction as a pastime is loved by millions of children and young people. By addressing the whole personality of the reader, the intellect and the heart, books elicit the values and attitudes displayed. They open paths towards others and offer new views of ourselves. A new perspective can become a source of tolerance and understanding. Therefore, literature, especially fiction for non-adult readers, has been paid special attention by the Mid-Term Global Evaluation of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). A stock of books, promoting justice through non-violence and peace through dialogue and reconciliation, will be included in the human rights education material that is to be prepared by Unesco for the promotion of culture of peace and dialogue. Joan Lingard's quintet about Sadie and Kevin displays the characteristics required for this collection. Firstly, the books present a complex interaction between various themes related to respect for human rights in general and in particular to the humanitarian issues typical for the areas ravaged by war and terrorism. Secondly, even though the fictional framework is already complete, the reality that gave rise to it is still attracting the attention of the world. In addition, the theme of intercultural and interreligious dialogue has been gaining in importance world-wide. The twenty-first century is a period in which the novels in question can still find a readership. 'Harmony in difference,' one of the ways in which tolerance is defined, is impossible without interreligious dialogue as is stressed in the Plan of Action to follow up the United Nations Year for Tolerance (1995). The same idea is expressed by the Catholic priest who after having a long discussion with Sadie says with admiration, 'If only a few more were like Sadie and Kevin here, able to show they can live together in peace and harmony.' (*A Proper Place*, p.31).

The same view is evidently shared by the third person narrator who will be most naturally associated with the author, at least by the young readers who may grow up without ever having the need or desire to read any of the official documents of the UN. Some may find out that the problems presented in the novels could never be theirs, while others may have to cope with similar issues. These novels can help shape new generations, the ones that should benefit from the Declaration on Children's Rights. The young discovering messages of peace in books will thus join all those who have already experienced most deeply the value of peace in their encounters with literature. These invaluable encounters with the fictional world will have had such an impact on their view of reality that their life story should reflect a healthy balance between the struggle for peace and empathy in their personal and social life. Characters like Kevin and Sadie were the advocates of the culture of peace long before the term was officially coined. Thus, today's readers may learn with Kevin and Sadie that peace grows from freedom and justice, from tolerance and reconciliation, from forgiveness and empathy. They may accept the vision that 'the only way that the problems of Ireland would be resolved was by love. Catholics and Protestants would have to learn to love one another.' (*Hostages to Fortune*, p.145)

**IBBY World
Congress**

Jay Heale

Children's Books with Human Rights Themes

by Pam Robson

STORIES ABOUT STREET CHILDREN

12+ years

***No Turning Back* by Beverley Naidoo**

Puffin, £4.99, ISBN 0140369481

This is a brilliant representation of the new South Africa, based upon the real life stories of street children. Siphso runs away to live on the streets; his stepfather is a drunken bully. He meets up with a gang and is almost drawn into glue-sniffing. Eventually he finds a home with a white family but the prejudice emanating from them sends him back on to the streets. With the help of a support group he finally makes contact with his mother again. A good read; a valuable discussion tool.

Teens

***Throwaways* by Ian Strachan**

Mammoth, £4.50, ISBN 0749712945

A story about street children, a topic that receives all too little attention from authors of stories for young people. Sky and Chip are deserted by their homeless, unemployed parents. Befriended by Dig, they build a home by the tip. A 'friend' offers them a better life but his terms are unacceptable. An excellent story designed to provoke a reaction from the reader. TV-tie-in.

***The Baby and Fly Pie* by Melvin Burgess**

Puffin, £3.99, ISBN 140369821

This is a powerful teenage novel in which the author uses some strong language. Sham, Fly Pie and Jane are street children who rummage through rubbish in order to survive. They find a baby, kidnapped by criminals, and decide to take responsibility for it. They believe they will get enough money to live better lives when they return the infant to its parents. Jane dreams of receiving a reward but the reality is tragic. A grim futuristic picture of British street children.

***Feral Kid* by Libby Hathorn**

Hodder, £3.99, ISBN 0340651245

An Australian setting for this powerful novel about street children. A warning note at the front advises readers of some violent scenes and strong language. The story goes full circle, ending where it begins. Robbie is 13 years old. Homeless and friendless, he meets Pale, a vicious drug addict. Amanda also befriends him, but she too is an addict. Pale forces Robbie to help him mug an old lady. This particular old lady proves to be Robbie's saviour. An optimistic ending.

STORIES ABOUT REFUGEES

9-12 years

***Kiss the Dust* by Elizabeth Laird**

Mammoth, £4.99, ISBN 0749708573

A refugee story from the series 'Contents,' winner of

the Children's Book Award in 1992. The story is told by Tara, a Kurdish refugee in Britain. Differences between the two cultures are eloquently highlighted; the Muslim way of life, such as the wearing of the chador by Muslim women, is contrasted with Western life style. An interesting introductory section provides fascinating background information about the Kurdish people.

***The Face at the Window* by Vivien Alcock**

Mammoth, £3.99, ISBN 0749726460

An exciting title that leaves room for both a prequel and a sequel. The setting is London; Lesley stays with her aunt whilst convalescing. Mum is abroad and Dad has gone. Next door lives the charitable Harwood family. The Harwood children have rescued a young refugee called Erri. Together the young people try to hide him from the grown-ups. Lesley becomes Erri's protector, but he is severely disturbed and near disaster brings adult intervention. The situation is resolved but Erri's background remains a mystery.

***Tug of War* by Joan Lingard**

Puffin, £4.99, ISBN 0140373195

The setting is Latvia during the second world war; this powerful story is now a modern classic. Latvian families are forced to flee their homes as the Russian move in and the Germans move out—one occupying force is exchanged for another. Teenage twins Astra and Hugo are separated and for the next four years their lives follow different paths. The story alternates between their two different stories. Maps and historical facts are provided at the front of the book so readers can follow the route taken by the family. The sequel *Between Two Worlds* follows the family to Canada.

***Between Two Worlds* by Joan Lingard**

Puffin, £4.50, ISBN 0140372970

The sequel to *Tug of War*; the family has fled Latvia and arrived in Canada. The author relates the family's struggle for survival in Toronto. Romance enters the scene.

***When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* by Judith Kerr**

Collins, £5.99, ISBN 000713763X

The year is 1933, the setting Germany. 9 year old Anna and her family are Jewish. Father disappears and they flee to Switzerland. The eponymous pink rabbit is left behind. Refugees, the family then move on to France and, finally, London. The reader sees similarities and differences across Europe prior to world war two. Anna learns French and adapts to change. Gender attitudes in Switzerland at that time will provoke discussion. The core of this moving story is the persecution of the Jews.

**Children's Books
with Human
Rights Themes**

Pam Robson

***The Silver Sword* by Ian Serraillier
Puffin, £5.99, ISBN 0140364528**

Written in 1956, this is a refugee story based upon actual events; the setting is Poland during the Nazi occupation. Three children travel alone to Switzerland in search of their parents. Ruth, Edek and Bronia are joined by Jan, an amoral orphan. Jan has in his possession the eponymous silver sword which belongs to the children's father. The sword becomes a symbol of hope. After terrible hardships the family is reunited. Reference is made to the International Children's village set up after the war to house orphans. This is a story that examines the after effects of war, particularly its effect upon children. Now a modern classic.

12+ years

***The Frozen Waterfall* by Gaye Hicyilmaz
Faber, £4.99, ISBN 0571194958**

12 year old Selda leaves her Turkish homeland, together with her mother and two sisters, to join her father in Switzerland. The author describes with stark realism the isolation felt by foreigners in a strange country. Selda is intelligent and soon learns to speak German, but she suffers racist insults at school. She does make two friends, the daughter of a rich industrialist and a Turkish refugee who is an illegal immigrant. There is a striking contrast here between the life styles of Swiss and Turkish families.

***Voyage* by Adele Geras**

Barn Owl Books, £4.99, ISBN 1903015006

First published in 1983, this is an historical novel set in November 1904. The setting is a refugee ship carrying Jews from Eastern Europe to America. They are fleeing persecution. The story line takes place during the journey, it does not extend beyond the berthing of the ship. Each character becomes a real person—from the resourceful Mina to the older and wiser Clara. All must cope with appalling conditions in their own way. A magnified view of the effects of prejudice and consequent anti-semitic behaviour—a triumph for the victims who are determined to find a better future.

***Natasha's Will* by Joan Lingard**

Puffin, £4.99, ISBN 0141308923

A powerfully realistic novel that contains echoes of Lingard's *Tug of War*. The story opens in Scotland, then the action shifts between present-day Scotland, where young Sonya lies in a coma, and Russia during the 1917 Revolution. The eponymous Natasha experienced this event as a young aristocrat and her flight as a refugee is described vividly. Natasha died in old age leaving no will. Her adopted family now live in her old Scottish home. Threatened with eviction they seek the will, which Natasha has hidden, leaving only a trail of cryptic clues relating to book titles.

***Refugee Boy* by Benjamin Zephaniah**

Bloomsbury, £4.99, ISBN 0747550867

The setting is London's East End. Alem arrives in London with his father, apparently for a holiday, but

his father returns to Ethiopia, leaving Alem behind. Mother is Eritrean—the war between these countries means that they are not safe. Then Alem hears that his mother has been murdered and his father rejoins him. They are denied refugee status and their new friends campaign on their behalf. Alem's father is shot and he's given asylum. The author's style of writing is slightly stilted but he presents powerfully an overt ideological message—his refugee characters are educated intelligent people humiliated by the system.

***Dark Waters* by Catherine MacPhail**

Bloomsbury, £5.99, ISBN 0747555494

This is a moralistic ghost story set in Scotland. Col McCann belongs to a family of villains. Col's father was killed whilst taking part in a robbery; his brother is equally vicious. Col rescues 10 year old Dominic from the frozen loch. Whilst submerged he sees a body but buries this image in his memory. Col becomes the local hero and is befriended by Dominic's wealthy family. Then Mungo, his brother, vandalises Dominic's home. Col meets Klaus, a Latvian refugee, and wants to help him. Eventually Col recalls the body in the loch and realises it is Klaus—Klaus is a ghost. Mungo is Klaus's killer and Col must decide what to do. An excellent story that raises key moral issues but also manages to maintain a level of humour.

***The Other Side of Truth* by Beverley Naidoo**

Puffin, £4.99, ISBN 0141304766

A powerful novel which begins in Nigeria during the military dictatorship of the early 1990s, and continues in London. The twin themes are the absence of moral justice for refugees, and prejudice. Sade and Femi are stunned by the murder of their mother, a victim of the Nigerian military. Their father is a campaigning journalist who opposes the military regime. The children are sent to London where they are bullied and terrorised because they cannot reveal the truth. Then their father reaches London only to be arrested and confined as an illegal immigrant. Sade obtains the support of the news media and eventually the situation calms.

Teens

***Maus 1 A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman**

Penguin, £9.99, ISBN 0140173153

This is part one of a zoomorphic biographical novel in comic strip format. The author's father, Vladek, a Jewish refugee from Hitler's Germany, recounts to his son the terrible events of the period. Black and white artwork is used to depict the Jews as mice, the Poles as pigs and the Nazis as cats. This is a harrowing story that tells of a wealthy Jewish family humiliated and debased by the Nazis. Part one ends as Vladek and his wife reach Auschwitz. The past is revealed against the backdrop of tension between father and son. Vladek is a difficult man, he and his new wife despise each other. Print is small and dense, the artwork detailed. A challenging book.

CALENDAR & EVENTS

29-31 August 2003, De Montfort University, Leicester BRITISH SHAKESPEARE ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

This conference has a seminar on 'Shakespeare Childhoods: Representing and Addressing Children in Shakespeare's Works and Afterlife.'

For details, see www.uclan.ac.uk or email Kate.Chedgzoy@newcastle.ac.uk

13th October 2003, London SHAKESPEARE'S CHILDREN - CHILDREN'S SHAKESPEARE

For details, contact Susan Greenhalgh, University of Surrey Roehampton, SW15 5PH

Email S.Greenhalgh@roehampton.ac.uk

22-23 November 2003, John Moores University, Liverpool LIFESTYLE NARRATIVES

This conference will have a strand on 'Texts for Young Adults,' to be coordinated by Mel Gibson and Kay Sambell. Proposals for papers welcome by 1st July 2003.

For details, email kay.sambell@northumbria.ac.uk

2-4 April 2004, Birmingham FROM HERE TO THERE AND BACK AGAIN

The 2004 Federation of Children's Book Groups Conference. Anyone who hasn't yet experienced one of these lively and entertaining conferences, providing the chance to meet many children's authors, not to mention the party spirit enhanced by the free-flowing wine sponsored by the publishers, they should certainly take the opportunity as soon as possible! Speakers include Niki Daly, Elizabeth Laird, Louise Rennison, Susan Price and Adele Geras.

For details, contact Pat Tate, 51 Highwood Avenue, Solihull B92 8QY

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NEWSLETTER DESIGNER WANTED!

After seven happy newsletters, Elisa Oreglia is stepping down and *IBBYlink* needs a new designer. The lay-out is done with the software PageMaker (but any other software for publishing, such as QuarkXPress, will be fine) and templates, style sheets and previous newsletters are available for guidance and inspiration. Elisa will be happy to work with anyone who's interested—it's quite easy, and a lot of fun!

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IBBY CONFERENCE 2003 - INFO & CALL FOR PROPOSALS

With this issue of *IBBYlink* you should find a flyer providing initial information about the annual IBBY conference, on Saturday 15th November, 2003, at Froebel College, University of Surrey Roehampton. The subject is **BOOKS AND BOUNDARIES: WRITERS AND THEIR AUDIENCES**; the original planned topic, **INDIA**, has been deferred until November 2004. We want to look at the way in which adults today (as in the more distant past but not during much of the twentieth century) are reading children's books, such as the Harry Potter series and the 'Northern Lights' trilogy. We hope to examine how marketing reflects this situation, and also to look at how adults often tend to name books from their childhood when asked for their favourites. We shall ask a panel of publishers and booksellers about these and other questions, which we hope will also be examined in detail in workshops and short papers. While the list of speakers is not yet complete, we are fortunate that Ann Thwaite, the celebrated biographer of Frances Hodgson Burnett and A.A.Milne, and Penelope Lively, distinguished novelist for both children and adults, have volunteered to present the opening session. **DO COME!**

If you would like to offer a proposal for a short paper, contact PatPinsent@aol.com before the end of June.